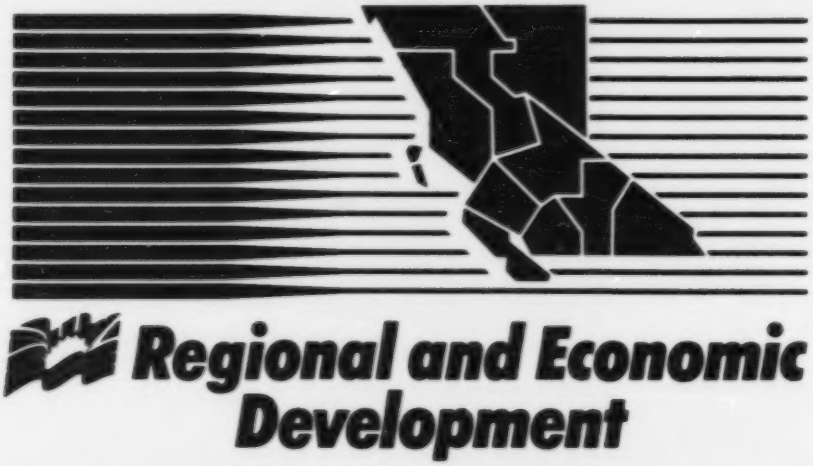
NECHAKO REGION

1990
ANNUAL REPORT



Honourable Bud Smith, Q.C.
Minister

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NECHAKO DEVELOPMENT REGION
ANNUAL REPORT 1990

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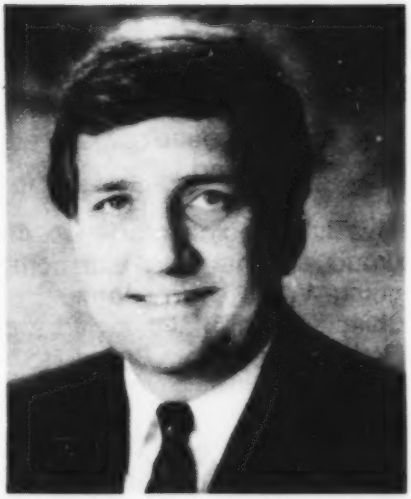
Produced February 1991

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER Honourable Bud Smith, Q.C.
Minister of Regional and Economic Development



As the Minister of Regional and Economic Development, I am pleased to participate with the Nechako Development Region in the important business of promoting and fostering economic growth and diversification for this region.

The Nechako region can be proud of its achievements over the past year, and I see many of these reflected in this report. They include the preparation of transportation priorities, support for the Smithers customs operation and an Atlin foreshore study, among others.

The regional development initiative has been well received in all parts of the province, but especially in the north. Government can count on the support, input and active involvement in regional projects by local elected officials and other business leaders in your communities, and this is a most vital component of regional development.

The regional development initiative provides an opportunity for you as its key participants to have a say in important issues which affect your region. The goal is to make the provincial government more responsive to regional goals and objectives, while at the same time increasing access to government programs and services in each of the development regions.

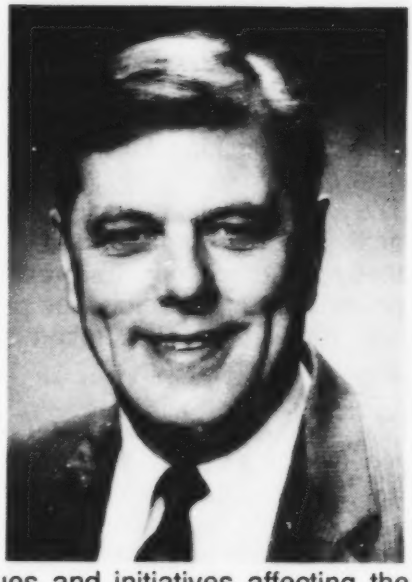
I would like to thank all of you who have been involved in the regional development initiative. This success is a result of your hard work and team efforts. I welcome the opportunity to build upon these accomplishments and look forward to working with you during 1991.

Bud Smith

Honourable Bud Smith, Q.C.
Minister of Regional and Economic Development

MESSAGE FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRMAN

Honourable Dave Parker



As I examine the contents of this report, which reviews our activities and accomplishment for 1990, I am struck by the range and diversity of issues which have been dealt with by the regional board and regional development staff supporting projects, committees and initiatives for Nechako.

This is a region made up of communities that are proud of what they are doing and where they are going. While each community has its own goals and objectives, all have joined together on the Nechako Region Advisory Board to make things happen regionally.

In the coming year, a new chairperson elected from within the membership of the board will be appointed, and several sectoral committees, such as transportation, mining, education and others as noted in this report, will continue the task of examining issues and initiatives affecting the region's well-being. The board, its several committees and issue-specific task forces are important mechanisms which ensure that the region and communities within it have the ability to provide input to, and consult with, the provincial government.

I will be pleased to continue my association with the Nechako Development Region and to represent its interests and concerns to government through the regional development board, of which I am a member.

I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the board, task forces, standing committees, and all volunteers who have worked hard for the Nechako region. I look forward to their continued support.

Honourable Dave Parker
Minister of Crown Lands

British Columbia

Development Regions

1. Vancouver Island/Coast
2. Mainland/Southwest
3. Thompson/Okanagan
4. Kootenay
5. Cariboo
6. North Coast
7. Nechako
8. Northeast

NECHAKO DEVELOPMENT REGION

INTRODUCTION

This annual report has been prepared to review the activities and accomplishments of the Nechako Development Region and to identify the key participants in the regionalization initiative.

A number of initiatives undertaken during 1990 have been completed and a number of others are currently underway. Regional development is an ongoing process which requires continued attention and effort. The Regional Advisory Board, which is currently chaired by Dave Parker, Minister of Crown Lands, has met frequently over the past year to review and consider matters of regional interest. The primary focus of this board is to foster and promote sound economic growth and diversification and to advocate equitable access to government services in the region.

Within the development region, Minister Dave Parker and MLA Jack Kempf act as a conduit to government on regional matters.

In addition to reviewing some of the activities and accomplishments of the Nechako Development Region, this report acknowledges the contributions of the members of boards, committees and task forces, as well as the large numbers of others who volunteer their time in making regionalization work.

REGIONALIZATION PROCESS IN ACTION

REGIONALIZATION

The purpose of regionalization is to ensure that regional needs are reflected in provincial policies, programs and services. This process is pursued through:

* the identification of regional needs;
* the advocacy of regional needs in the development of provincial policies and programs;
* provision of regional input into provincial initiatives and strategies;
* regional participation in government programs; and
* assistance in major economic development projects.

Regionalization is accomplished through the efforts of the following groups working with the Ministry of Regional and Economic Development.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

In December 1989, the Nechako Regional Development Board was formed to act as the lead advocate for regional initiatives. The board, which consists of seven cabinet ministers and two MLAs, meets on a regular basis to discuss regional priorities and develop recommendations for cabinet. Bud Smith is the chairman of this board and Dave Parker is a member.

REGIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Nechako Regional Advisory Board is made up of representatives from local and regional government, native and other community groups appointed by the minister responsible for the region. The board has, in the past, met approximately six times per year and has been chaired by Dave Parker.

SECTOR COMMITTEES

A number of standing committees have been established, with chairpersons appointed from the regional advisory board. As issues arise, these committees will investigate them and report findings and recommendations to the board. The committees are as follows:

* Transportation;
* Mining;
* Forestry;
* Tourism;
* Health;
* Education;
* Government Services;
* Native Affairs;
* Agriculture; and
* Energy.

TASK FORCES

As the need arises, a task force may be established, with the chairperson usually designated by the Regional Advisory Board. A task force is an ad hoc working group formed to address a specific initiative or idea. With the approval of the minister, the chairperson may invite members from the community at large to sit on the task force as resource people. A Task Force generally has a time-limited mandate.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Task Force met in September 1990 to review and update regional priorities which were developed in 1989 under the provincial "Freedom to Move" initiative. Colin Seeley, mayor of Fraser Lake is the chairman of this Task Force. Revised transportation priorities were presented at the September 1990 Regional Advisory Board meeting held in Burns Lake and were communicated to the Minister of Transportation and Highways by Dave Parker, on behalf of the board.

NORTH LOOP ROAD STUDY

A study was commissioned and completed which examined the socio-economic cost benefits of a loop road network to service the proposed Mt. Milligan Mine north of Fort St. James. The premise is that a loop road providing links between the mine and the towns of Fort St. James, Mackenzie and Vanderhoof would increase economic activity for the area. The mayor of Fort St. James, Sandra Kovacs, chaired a task force addressing this review.

TOURISM

A Tourism Task Force has been established to review and identify tourism opportunities and development strategies for the region. A number of initial meetings have been held under the chairmanship of Fred Shortreid of Smithers. A local consultant has been hired, and representatives of the ministries of Tourism, Recreation and Culture, and Regional and Economic Development are providing technical assistance.

WOOD WASTE AND CO-GENERATION

A wood waste study was completed in April 1990 as a result of a task force review chaired by Ray Hennessy of Burns Lake. Interest continues in finding solutions to effectively and productively use wood wastes generated from milling operations. Representatives from the town of Houston met with BC Hydro officials and continue to pursue co-generation possibilities. Other alternative uses of wood wastes include pelletization and the generation of pherols or carbon black for the export markets.

HEALTH CARE STUDY

Each of the eight regions in the province have prepared an assessment of health care needs and concerns, which are identified in a study. This study has been submitted to the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs to directly advocate for improvements to health care delivery in the region. Angus Davis of Fraser Lake chaired the Task Force on Health Care.

ATLIN FORESHORE STUDY

The Nechako region, in co-operation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture, is co-funding a study of foreshore development on Atlin Lake. The study, following community dialogue, will serve as a community plan governing the placement and construction of boat and floatplane docks and services.

SMITHERS CUSTOMS OPERATION

The Town of Smithers is operating a pilot project customs office in order to encourage international travel and commercial freighting into the area. The initiative has a special interest in tourism development, and hence the region has funded the Smithers Chamber of Commerce for related tourism development activities.

STRONG COMMUNITIES IN THE 90s

The Strong Communities in the 90s initiative is designed to assist communities to develop strategies to accelerate the growth and diversification of their local economies. A facilitator has been hired to work with the communities of Smithers and Telkwa.

LITERACY CONFERENCE

A committee representing regional education and community service organizations has been formed to develop and co-ordinate a literacy conference to be held in September 1991. Representative organizations are the Whuneez Society, Literacy BC, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, the College of New Caledonia and the Ministry of Regional and Economic Development.

The Whuneez Society has completed a literacy directory for the region which outlines agencies and organizations providing service in this subject area.

NORTHERN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Annually, provincial and territorial ministers and representatives meet to discuss issues of northern importance, to enable them to advise their respective governments on northern development policy and to lobby the federal government as appropriate.

Most recently, this group contracted a study on the impacts of the proposed removal of the Northern Tax Allowance and the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax, and submitted this study to the federal government. In December 1990, the federal government announced a change to eligibility rules of the Northern Tax Allowance which was less severe than originally proposed. Under this relaxed application, each eligible northern community would be identified as a 100 percent eligibility zone or a 50 percent eligibility zone, to be fully implemented by 1994.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN B.C.

The region is an active supporter of the concept of provision of higher education on a decentralized basis. Communities within the region will be bringing forward specific proposals to encourage and advocate the delivery of education on a regional or community basis.

LAKES DISTRICT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

The communities of Granisle and Burns Lake have joined with rural areas of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District to establish an economic development function. Plans for 1991 include hiring an economic development officer and establishing an office to help industry take advantage of opportunities in the Lakes district.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Honourable Bud Smith, Q.C.	Minister of Regional and Economic Development
Honourable Stanley Hagen	Minister of Advanced Education
Honourable Dave Parker	Minister of Crown Lands
Honourable Jack Weisgerber	Minister of Native Affairs
Honourable Bruce Strachan	Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology
Honourable Howard Dirks	Provincial Secretary
Honourable Harry DeJong	Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
Dan Peterson	MLA, Langley
Larry Chalmers	MLA, Okanagan South

REGIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Honourable Dave Parker
Minister of Crown Lands
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Tom Euverman
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FORMER MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Len Fox, Former Mayor of Vanderhoof

Brian Northup, Former Mayor of Smithers

CHAIRPERSONS OF SECTOR COMMITTEES

Transportation	Colin Seeley
Energy	Tom Euverman
Mines	Bill Zemenchik
Forestry	Frank Read
Health Care	Peter Stroet
Tourism	Fred Shortreid
Native Affairs	Pat Edzerza
Education	Bill Gilgan
Government Services	Sandra Kovacs
Agriculture	Jim Davidson

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